

Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
Meeting Minutes
October 12, 2016

A meeting of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC) was held on October 12, 2016, at the American Legion, 1708 Commonwealth Ave., Richmond.

Members Present

- Harold Barton, Air Force Association
- Rick Oertel, American Legion
- Richard Mansfield, AMVETS
- Robert Sempek, Association of the United States Army
- Curtis Jennings, Disabled American Veterans
- Ken Shelton, Fifth Baptist Veterans' Ministry
- William Ashton, Fleet Reserve Association
- Robert Herbert, Legion of Valor
- John Clickener, Marine Corps League
- Stuart Williams, Military Officers Association of America
- William Barrett, Military Order of the World Wars
- Dan Dennison, National Association for Uniformed Services
- Raymond Kenney, Paralyzed Veterans of America
- David Sitler, Reserve Officers Association
- Perry Taylor, Roanoke Valley Veterans Council
- Dan Boyer, Veterans of Foreign Wars
- Robert Huffman, Virginia Army/Air National Guard Enlisted Association
- Adam Provost, Virginia National Guard Association
- Jim Icenhour, Chairman, Board of Veterans Services
- Pat Webb, Chairman, Veterans Services Foundation
- Commissioner John L. Newby II, Department of Veterans Services

Members Absent

- Lauren Augustine, Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans of America
- Tim Whitmore, Korean War Veterans Association
- Jim Cuthbertson, Military Order of the Purple Heart
- Glenn Rodriguez, Navy Seabee Veterans of America
- Jon Ostrowski, Non Commissioned Officers Association
- Charles Montgomery, Vietnam Veterans of America
- Marie Juliano, Women Marines Association

Alternates Present (representing their VSO)

- Mark Atchison, Military Order of the Purple Heart
- Rhonda Killmon, Non-Commissioned Officers Association
- George Corbett, Vietnam Veterans of America

Alternates Present (not representing their VSO)

- John Cooper, AMVETS
- Jim Barrett, Marine Corps League
- Robert Barnette, Virginia Army/Air National Guard Enlisted Association

Commonwealth of Virginia Officials Present

- Delegate Betsy Carr
- Delegate Rich Anderson
- Leslie Frazier, Office of the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs
- Carrie Ann Alford, DVS
- Tom Herthel, DVS
- Glendalynn Glover, DVS
- Jack Hilgers, DVS
- Karla Boughey, DVS
- Brian Pickral, DVS
- Michelle Crone, DVS
- Beverly VanTull, DVS
- Christina Barrille, Virginia National Guard

Others Present

- Bill Whitt, Fleet Reserve Association
- Frank Wickersham, MOAA
- Mrs. Wickersham
- Don Kaiserman, MOAA
- Katie Pillis, Office of Senator Mark Warner
- Karen Jeffries, Navy Mutual Aid Association

Items included in the Agenda Packet

Agenda

July 13, 2016 meeting minutes (Agenda Item IV)

Reports (Agenda Item V)

- Board of Veterans Services
- Veterans Services Foundation

JLC Elected and Appointed Officers for 2016-2017 (Agenda Item VIIa)

Summary Matrix of Proposed 2017 JLC Initiatives (Agenda Item VIIb)

Proposed Position Papers for 2017 JLC Initiatives (Agenda Item VIIb)

The meeting agenda is included as *Attachment 1*.

Opening, Pledge of Allegiance, Invocation & Thoughts

Chairman Harold “Bart” Barton, called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m., and led the Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

In the absence of Chaplain L. T. “Tim” Whitmore, Mr. John Clickener delivered an opening prayer, including special thoughts on the passing of Polly Huffman, wife of JLC member Bob Huffman.

Roll Call of VSOs, Quorum Determination, Approval of the Agenda, and Introduction of Guests

The roll was called, and 21 of the 25 Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) represented on the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC) were recorded as being represented. A quorum was determined. Mr. Jim Icenhour, Chairman of the Board of Veterans Services (BVS); Mr. Pat Webb, Chairman of the Veterans Services Foundation (VSF); and DVS Commissioner John L. Newby II were recorded as present.

Chairman Barton asked Ms. Alford to introduce the guests.

The names and organizations of the guests are recorded above. Chairman Barton welcomed them to the meeting.

Approve July 13, 2016 Meeting Minutes

Mr. John Clickner made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Rick Oertel, to approve the minutes of the July 13, 2016 meeting. The motion carried **unanimously**.

Reports

Board of Veterans Services

Board of Veterans Services (BVS) Chairman Jim Icenhour gave the BVS report.
(Attachment 2)

Veterans Services Foundation

Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Chairman Pat Webb gave the VSF report. (Attachment 3)

Virginia Military Advisory Council

Mr. Bill Barrett stated that the Virginia Military Advisory Council (VMAC) is scheduled to meet October 20, and he will have a report at the December JLC meeting.

State Board of Elections

Mr. Stu Williams updated the JLC that there was no new report and they are holding off till after Election Day with contacting SBE.

Virginia War Memorial Board

Marie Juliano was absent and there was no report forwarded to the Chairman.

Hampton Drug Court Veterans Tract Advisory Council

Chairman Barton gave background on the Council and said he has been attending meetings and asked if the JLC should be part of this and the Fairfax General District Court Veteran Docket Steering Committee. Mr. Rich Mansfield made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Stu Williams, to approve the request. The motion carried **unanimously**.

The Chairman asked for volunteers to attend the meetings. Rich Mansfield volunteered to attend the Hampton Advisory Council meetings and Dan Dennison volunteered to attend the Fairfax Steering Committee meetings. Commissioner Newby gave a brief update on the Supreme Court

veterans docket work group and approved of the idea of the JLC becoming involved with Hampton and Fairfax.

Report from DVS Commissioner John Newby

Commissioner Newby gave a brief update on the budget shortfall and Governor's request to state agencies in regards to budget requests for the upcoming session and that DVS had planned to take a bit of a cut and is therefore in good shape and has planned for the budget shortfall without a cut in services or laying staff off. DVS, outside of the VVFS work group, will not be requesting funding. He gave a short briefing on MMAC and that they will have it stood up by December and ready to take applications from medics and corpsmen and get them into the six partner hospitals. War Memorial expansion should break ground within the next 12 months. He then turned the balance of his time over to Benefits Director Tom Herthel.

Presentation from DVS Benefits Director Tom Herthel

Mr. Herthel gave a thorough presentation on how the Benefits Section has been reformed and improved since his arrival in 2014. The presentation included several photos of the old benefits offices and systems and a detailed explanation of how offices have been moved and improved, staff trained and systems upgraded with the BeneVets system of 100% electronic return of claims to the VA and the new quality control measures in place.

Mr. Herthel then briefed the JLC on the recent news of a DVS employee from the McGuire Benefits office who had been taking paper files and putting them in a storage unit. He explained the current process of DVS benefits employees going through the boxes of papers to find and catalogue all veterans claims, or parts of veterans claims, and what the next steps will be working with the VA to figure out which claims were filed, partially filed or not filed at all. He stated that DVS's goal is to make sure all the veterans are made whole and their applications are fully complete to the maximum extent of the law and DVS Benefits staff will be working on that, while maintaining customer service levels for all new and in-process veterans.

Commissioner Newby thanked Delegate Rich Anderson and Senator Bryce Reeves, (not in attendance), for their understanding that this is one employee, and for their assistance and support and writing a statement in response to the DVS press release. He also reminded the JLC that this is an on-going legal investigation and will take time.

Chairman Barton asked if that could be sent to the JLC members. Ms. Alford said she would send it via email. She also thanked Delegate Anderson and Senator Reeves and their legislative aides for all the help they provided.

Mr. Herthel then opened it up for questions.

Mr. Bill Ashton asked if DVS has contacted the VA about this and the potential issues it raises. Mr. Herthel explained that he is in close contact with the VA both in Roanoke and Washington and they have agreed to work closely with DVS to figure out what they can and can't accept, based on statutory boundaries.

Mr. Ashton also asked about DIC. Mr. Herthel answered that DVS will have to scour the federal

statutes to see what can and cannot be approved. Ms. Katie Pillis from Senator Mark Warner's office stood and added that if there are veterans with the specific DIC issue, to refer them to her and she will help the spouses.

Commissioner Newby restated that the VA reached out to DVS and has been very supportive.

Mr. Stu Williams asked if this will create issues and wait times for veterans who walk into benefits offices now. Mr. Herthel said that he would be lying if he said it did not, but DVS is working diligently to make the impact to other veterans as small as possible and he is pulling staff from less busy offices who are highly experienced and have access to VSO records as well as DVS records.

Mr. Raymond Kenney asked if he should share the information with his PVA meeting he was attending after the JLC. Commissioner Newby said yes of course, and the VSOs who do the work of submitting claims may see a spike in veterans requesting assistance in the next few months as some may not want VDVS's help any more.

Mr. Herthel restated that while he doesn't know how many claims were not filed, he has hundreds of date stamps showing applications were filed. It is a matter of going through each file to see if it was fully submitted, or what percentage was filed.

Mr. Dan Boyer asked about geographic impact and if it is only people around the McGuire VA in Richmond. Mr. Herthel said that it is a good portion of the state, due to the nature of the office located on the campus of a VAMC, there could be a larger impact area than just Richmond, as veterans visit the hospital and the DVS benefits office at the same trip. It could affect veterans in Northern VA and Central VA where McGuire is the closest VA hospital.

The DVS press release is included as *Attachment 4*.

The General Assembly Military & Veterans Caucus Statement is included as *Attachment 5*.

The powerpoint presentation was emailed to the JLC members the day after the meeting and is included upon request.

New Business

Approve JLC Appointed Offices for 2016-2017

Chairman Barton presented the Elected Officers and Appointed Officers as listed in the agenda packet (*Attachment 6*). Based on the earlier motion to add JLC representation to the Hampton Drug Court Veterans Tract Advisory Council and the Fairfax General District Court Veterans Docket Steering Committee, the list of appointed officers will be amended to include Rich Mansfield, Hampton Drug Court Veterans Tract Advisory Council and Dan Dennison, Fairfax General District Court Veterans Docket Steering Committee.

Mr. Rich Mansfield made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Bob Huffman to accept the list of Elected Officers and Appointed Officers. The motion carried **unanimously**.

Review and discussion of potential 2017 JLC Initiatives

Mr. Dave Sitler, Legislative Officer, presented the initiatives proposed at the April 22 meeting and discussed at the July 13 meeting for final review and approval. He opened it up for a motion and discussion.

Mr. Stu Williams asked if there were going to be any other issues brought before the JLC for consideration, mentioning the Secretary's office specifically.

Ms. Leslie Frazier from Secretary Harvey's office said that there will be one legislative initiative and she is still waiting to hear back from the Governor's policy team. It will be on veterans' entrepreneurship.

Chairman Barton stated that he did not receive, as requested, a policy initiative from Secretary Harvey on his potential legislation for 2017 and all he had seen was an outline in one email, and not the detail to put into a JLC paper. Mr. Sitler asked about sponsors and who would be the most likely. Chairman Barton said that IAVA and Ms. Augustine would be the most obvious choice, but she was absent from the meeting. He said Mr. Sitler, Ms. Augustine and himself should sit down and try to turn the Secretary's initiative into a paper. But, does not know enough about the policy or thinks anyone understands the issue well enough to make a recommendation to accept adding it to the JLC priorities list without the initiative in front of the JLC. He stated that he would like to see more details from the Secretary's office and assess in December.

Mr. Rich Mansfield made a **motion** to maintain the list and prioritize as they are listed, **seconded** by Mr. Dan Boyer.

Mr. Rick Oertel stated that he feels the JLC should be mindful of the current budget situation and realities and should drop the initiatives: "In-state tuition for all members of the Reserve Components" and the "Electronic Ballot Return." He feels they will not make it out of the legislature and the JLC should let these "sit" for a year.

Mr. Dan Boyer stated that bringing initiatives forward shows the JLC is serious about the issue. He feels the JLC should not necessarily be concerned with budgetary restrictions or forecasts or be afraid to put forward an issue because of the fiscal impact. Several issues took many years of going before committees and failing and being revised before finally being successful. He suggested the JLC keep the whole list as presented in July.

Mr. Bill Ashton asked if the JLC can support the Secretary's initiative without adding it to the list. He also stated that he does not look at the numbers when talking to legislators and pushing for the initiatives, he pushes for all of the equally and wonders if they need to be prioritized and numbered.

Chairman Barton said the JLC has supported a Secretary's bill in the past without adding it to the list.

Chairman Barton also brought up the issue of tracking issues and service lines that do not have a policy initiative that year. He recommended a separate list with 1-2 sentences of a status update on various issues. The current issues for 2017 being Care Centers, Benefits and Veterans

Dockets. Commissioner Newby said that was possible for DVS staff to handle. Ms. Alford concurred and offered to take care of creating that list for the next meeting.

Mr. Sitler reminded the group that there was a **motion** on the table. Mr. Mansfield restated the motion to maintain the current list and number as in order, **seconded** by Mr. Dan Boyer to maintain the list of initiatives and prioritize in their current form. The motion passed **unanimously**.

Mr. Sitler made a **motion** to number the priorities and release numbers 2-6 to the public, **seconded** by Mr. Dan Boyer to maintain the list of initiatives and prioritize in their current form. The motion passed **unanimously**.

A summary matrix and position paper for each of the seven proposed initiatives was included in the agenda packet for review and reference (*Attachment 7*).

Other New Business and Open Discussion

Since Deputy Commissioner Combs was not at the meeting to give an update on the Veteran Care Centers, Chairman Barton asked if that could be moved to December and if the JLC could have a more thorough presentation like the Benefits presentation today. The Commissioner said that would not be a problem. The business item was tabled till the December meeting.

Mr. Rick Oertel requested that members send him information on Veterans Day events the VSOs are going to have around the state.

Mr. Dave Sitler mentioned a group “Our Community Salutes” a nationwide, ad hoc organization for local communities who want to put together a ceremony for new enlistees.

Ms. Alford mentioned the Virginia Counselors Association will have military and veterans as one of their themes this year for their state conference in Williamsburg and will be screening a documentary, *Thank You For Your Service*, on Friday night, Nov. 11 which is Veterans Day. JLC members are all invited and those in Hampton Roads are encouraged to attend. There will also be a DVS table at the conference and any JLC members able to help out with staffing the table would be appreciated.

Public Comment

None.

Closing Remarks

Chairman Barton reminded the members that the next meeting will be held December 21st at the American Legion building.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

ATTACHMENT 1
Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
American Legion Building
1708 Commonwealth Avenue, Richmond
October 12, 2016
10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

AGENDA

- I. Opening and Pledge of Allegiance – *Bart Barton, JLC Chairman* (10:00 – 10:05)
- II. Opening Prayer & Thoughts, John Clickener (10:05-10:10)
- III. Roll call of VSOs, quorum determination, approval of agenda and introduction of guests –
Bart Barton, Chairman (10:10 – 10:17)
- IV. Approve July 13, 2016 meeting minutes – *Bart Barton, Chairman* (10:17 – 10:20)
- V. Reports (10:20 – 10:40)
 - a. Board of Veterans Services – *Jim Icenhour, BVS Chairman*
 - b. Veterans Services Foundation – *Pat Webb, VSF Chairman*
 - c. VMAC, *Bill Barrett*
 - d. State Board of Elections, *Stu Williams*
 - e. Virginia War Memorial Board, *Marie Juliano*
 - f. Hampton Drug Court Veterans Tract Advisory Council, *Bart Barton*
 - g. Department of Veterans Services, *Commissioner John Newby*
- VI. Report from DVS Benefits Services (10:40 – 11:10) – *Tom Herthel, Benefits Director*

BREAK (10 Minutes)

- VII. New business (11:20 – 12:20)
 - a. Approve JLC Appointed Officers for 2016-2017, *Bart Barton*
 - b. Review and prioritize 2017 JLC Initiatives and Appoint Sponsors, *Dave Sitler*
 - c. Update on Virginia's new Veteran Care Centers, *Deputy Commissioner Steven Combs*
 - d. Other new business and open discussion, *Bart Barton*
- VIII. Public comment period (12:20 – 12:25)
- IX. Closing remarks and prepare for next meeting – *Bart Barton, JLC Chairman* (12:25 – 12:30)
- X. Adjourn (12:30)

Lunch to follow the meeting

ATTACHMENT 2
BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES REPORT TO
THE JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICES (JLC)
October 12, 2016

The Board of Veterans Services (BVS) met on August 18, 2016. At the meeting, the Board elected Jim Icenhour as the new Chairman, and Johnny Johnson as Vice Chairman. The board voted to create a work group to research veterans entrepreneurship in Virginia. The work group will be chaired by Nick Kesler, with Belinda Pinckney, Joana Garcia and Chris Chon as members.

Delegate Kathleen Murphy and Maj. Chris Chon, Army National Guard, were introduced and welcomed by the board members as the newest appointees. We look forward to their participation on the board.

The Board of Veterans Services voted on new Code language to better reflect how its organized to fulfill its Code-mandated mission of support to the Commissioner and Department of Veterans Services. Our legislative members are currently working on draft legislation for the needed amendments to the Code. We will continue to keep the JLC up-to-date as we move through the process.

The BVS is made up of fourteen citizen members, five legislators, and three *ex officio* members. Board members are in regular contact with the Department of Veterans Services to provide policy input on key operational issues.

The next BVS meeting will be Thursday, November 17th.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Icenhour
Chairman

ATTACHMENT 3
VETERANS SERVICES FOUNDATION
REPORT TO
Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
October 12, 2016

The Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Board of Trustees has held one meeting since the last BVS meeting. A Board meeting was held on August 3 with a quorum present. In addition to the usual reports and updates on VVFS and V3, the following events occurred and actions taken at the Board meeting:

- (1) Reviewed Foundation income, expenses, and fundraising events conducted during FY16;
- (2) Approved the Final FY16 VSF Financial Report;
- (3) Approved VSF-DVS FY18 Budget;
- (4) Approved VSF-DVS Performance Budgeting;
- (5) Approved VSF Fund Restructuring;
- (6) Approved the Strategy Plan 2017-2021;
- (7) Approved Trustees Bylaws Revisions;
- (8) Approved updates of VSF-DVS Joint Policies #1, 2, 3, 4, and 10;
- (9) Approved VSF FY17 Goals and Objectives
- (10) Adopted a VSF Board Action Plan;
- (11) Appointed Development and Finance Committee officers for FY17; and
- (12) Appointed a Finance Committee Advisor.

As of 30 June, the Foundation has received donations during FY16 of about \$682,000, of which almost \$488,000 is for VVFS and \$110,000 for V3. While the number of donors has decreased, overall donations are up 13% over last year with VVFS being up 22% over last year. The first quarter FY17 Report is not available as yet, but should be by the end of October and will be reported at the JLC December meeting. As always, the Foundation extends its sincere congratulations to the outstanding outreach of all DVS activities to realize this significant fundraising level. It could not have been accomplished without the dedication of all DVS personnel.

The Board approved the following Committee officers for FY17:

Chair, Development, Frank Finelli
Vice Chair Development, John Lesinski
Chair Finance, Frank Driscoll
Vice Chair Finance, Bill Lechler

The Board elected Walter A. Stosch, CPA, as a Finance Committee Advisor

The next Board meeting is scheduled for November 9, 2016 at the Libbie Mill Library. Items for the next meeting may include: (1) approval of the First Quarter FY17 Financial Statement; (2) approval of budget adjustments for FY17, if any; (3) discussion of Strategy Plan and Board Action Plan progress; (4) approve VSF-DVS Joint Policy updates; (5) take additional actions as required to support the five year strategy plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Webb
VSF Chairman

ATTACHMENT 4



The Virginia Department of Veterans Services

900 East Main Street • Richmond, VA 23219 • www.dvs.virginia.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 7, 2016

Contact: Tina Parlett-Calhoun
Communications Director
804-840-0713
tina.parlett-calhoun@dvs.virginia.gov

Veterans Claims Documents Discovered in Former Department of Veterans Services Employee's Possession *Commonwealth to Investigate and Notify and Assist Affected Veterans*

The Virginia Department of Veterans Services ("DVS") announced today that a large number of documents, including veterans' claims, were discovered on Sept. 29 in a storage unit belonging to a former DVS employee who worked at the agency's veterans benefits office located at Richmond's McGuire VA Medical Center (VAMC).

DVS officials retrieved and secured the documents at the agency's Richmond headquarters, and are now reviewing the documents so that all affected veterans can be notified and assisted with any necessary actions to ensure that their claims have been properly filed. The Attorney General notified the Virginia State Police and requested it begin a criminal investigation.

Because agency documents were comingled with personal papers and possessions, the exact number of claims records affected is not yet known, but all appear to be dated between 2011 and mid-2015, and exclusively from the DVS benefits office at McGuire VAMC.

"We are in the process of reviewing documents and determining the status of all claims as quickly as we are able," said John Newby, Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services. "We are committed to providing additional information to impacted veterans and to the public as we determine the full scope of the situation and how many veterans may be affected."

The former employee worked at DVS from January 2012 until August 25, 2015. Earlier in August 2015, DVS officials found unfiled claims in the employee's office. Those claims were reviewed, and DVS contacted affected veterans to advise them and provide assistance. DVS terminated the employee at that time and has since assigned a new office manager for that location.

Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs John Harvey and Commissioner Newby identified the need to move from a paper-based system to an electronic claims filing system at the beginning of the administration. All DVS benefits offices converted to an electronic system by June 2015. Virginia was the first state to fully automate its veterans' claims filing process. Under current practice, all claims are now tracked electronically and manually by senior managers to ensure that no documents are misplaced or lost and that all claims are filed in a timely manner. "I am deeply concerned about the veterans whose records have been mishandled, and I have directed my team to use all available resources to identify these men and women and ensure that they receive the benefits and care that they are due," said Secretary Harvey. "At the beginning of this administration, we identified a vulnerability in the Commonwealth's claims process, and we began implementing a solution to this serious deficiency. Regrettably, our fears were justified, and the danger we were working so hard to address was already a reality. We stand ready to assist any and all veterans impacted, and we are determined to prevent any similar mishandling of information from happening in the future."

Veterans whose claims were contained in these documents will be contacted by DVS personnel as the investigation continues. Additional information is available on the agency website at www.dvs.virginia.gov. If you are a veteran who filed a claim at DVS's benefit office located at McGuire VAMC and believe that you may have been affected, please contact DVS at veteransassistance@dvs.virginia.gov, or (804) 786-0286.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Q: I am a veteran who filed a claim with the DVS benefits office at the McGuire VAMC. Am I impacted?

A: We don't yet know. Our technical experts are reviewing all the materials returned to the Commonwealth to determine the number of impacted veterans, their identities and the status of their claims. This will take a number of weeks to complete. If your claims information is in the materials, you will be contacted shortly.

Q: Were all claims at McGuire's benefits office impacted?

A: No. At this time, we believe only claims filed by one particular former DVS employee.

Q: What is the timeframe?

A: The investigation to date indicates that the recovered documents date from late 2011 through June-2015.

Q: Did the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs ("the VA") or the McGuire VA Medical Center have anything to do with this?

A: No. DVS employees are provided space at the McGuire VA Medical Center to assist veterans, but neither the VA nor its McGuire VA Medical Center are involved in this incident. Specifically, no VA personnel were involved with the collection or retention of the discovered documents.

Q: Is there anything I can do now to see whether I've been impacted?

A: Yes. We encourage all veterans to either visit eBenefits (www.ebenefits.va.gov), or visit one of DVS's 26 Benefits Offices located throughout the Commonwealth. Trained representatives can check on the status of your claim or benefit. Please consult our webpage <http://www.dvs.virginia.gov/benefits/> for the Benefits Office nearest to you.

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ATTACHMENT 5



Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of Delegate Richard L. Anderson
Office of Senator Bryce E. Reeves

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 7, 2016

Contact: Legislative Aide Mark T. (Tommy) Herbert (Del. Anderson)

Cell: 804-761-3235 (please do not publish)

E-mail: THerbert@house.virginia.gov

Contact: Legislative Aide Cassy Horn (Sen. Reeves)

Office: 540-645-8440

E-mail: cassy@brycereeves.com

**Statement by House and Senate Co-Chairs of the
General Assembly Military & Veterans Caucus**
on
***Department of Veterans Services Press Release Regarding
Discovery of Veterans Documents in Possession of Former DVS Employee***

RICHMOND -- The Virginia State Police was notified today and asked to investigate a large number of documents, including veterans' claims applications and associated information, discovered on Sept. 29 in a storage unit belonging to a former DVS employee who worked at the agency's veterans benefits office located at Richmond's McGuire VA Medical Center.

DVS officials have retrieved and secured the documents at the agency's Richmond headquarters, and the documents are being reviewed so that all affected veterans can be notified and assisted to ensure that their claims have been properly filed.

The Virginia Military and Veterans Caucus, a bipartisan and bicameral group, has worked closely with Commissioner Newby and agency staff over the past several years. We know DVS is full of capable and energetic people working hard every day, with the best interest of our veterans at heart. We are committed to assisting them in any way possible moving forward.

"Virginia was the first state in the nation to move to a 100% electronic filing system. BeneVets

has been key in getting Virginia's veterans disability claims approved quickly and efficiently. Thankfully, with this electronic system now in place, DVS is able to track a veteran's claim from start to finish," stated Senator Bryce Reeves, former Army Ranger and co-chair of the Military and Veterans Caucus. "The legislature has made a strong commitment in the past couple years to DVS and we will continue to work with them on security and other issues."

"Here in Virginia, we take our obligation to those who have worn the cloth of our country very seriously," stated Delegate Rich Anderson, a 30-year USAF Colonel (Retired) and co-chair of the Military and Veterans Caucus. "As we have done over the last three years, we will work closely with Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, John C. Harvey and Commissioner John Newby to address this situation and prevent any similar mishandling of veteran information from happening in the future. This is our first, last, and foremost priority."

Veterans whose claims were contained in these documents from 2011-2015 will be contacted by DVS personnel as the investigation continues. Additional information is available on the agency website at www.dvs.virginia.gov. If you are a veteran who filed a claim at DVS's benefit office located at McGuire VAMC and believe you may have been affected, please contact DVS at (804) 786-0826, or by email at: veteransassistance@dvs.virginia.gov.

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ATTACHMENT 6

JLC ELECTED OFFICERS: 2016-2017

Chairman: Harold H. ("Bart") Barton, Jr.

Vice Chairman: Marie G. Juliano

JLC APPOINTED OFFICERS: 2016-2017

Legislative Officer: David K. Sitler

Assistant Legislative Officer: Robert A. Sempek

Chaplain: L.T. Whitmore

Constitution & By-Laws Committee:

- Chairman: Richard Mansfield
- Members: Perry Taylor and Adam Provost

Nominating Committee:

- Chairman: Dan Boyer
- Members: John Clickener, Jon Ostrowski

JLC Representative to the Virginia Military Advisory
Council (VMAC):

- Primary: William Barrett, Jr.
- Alternate: Curtis Jennings

JLC Representative to Board of Veteran Services (BVS)

- Primary: Harold H. ("Bart") Barton, Jr.
- Alternate: Marie G. Juliano

JLC Representative to Veterans Services Foundation (VSF)

- Primary: William B. Ashton
- Alternate: Abe Zino (A)

JLC Representative to the Virginia War Memorial Board

- Primary: Marie G. Juliano
- Alternate: Robert Huffman

JLC Representative to the State Board of Elections

- Electronic Ballot Return working group:
- Primary: Stu Williams
- Alternate: Vic Pena (A)

JLC Representative to BVS Committees:

Cemeteries

- Primary: Charlie Montgomery
- Alternate: George Corbett (A)

Care Centers

- Primary: Danal Dennison
- Alternate: Chip Moran (A)

Benefits

- Primary: Perry C. Taylor
- Alternate: Dan Karnes (A)

Veteran Entrepreneurship Study Group

- Primary: Lauren Augustine
- Alternate: TBD

ATTACHMENT 7
Summary Sheet of Proposed Initiatives and Initiatives 2-6

Summary of Proposed 2017 Initiatives
October 12, 2016

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>
JLC 2017 <i>Virginia Veteran and Family Support Services</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly appropriate additional funds and new FTE positions for VVFS as requested by the work group.
JLC 2017 <i>Virginia War Memorial</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly appropriate additional \$100,000 (GF) FY18 to ensure the Virginia War Memorial has the resources necessary to accomplish its dual mission of honor and education.
JLC 2017 <i>Guard Income Tax Subtraction</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly increase the state income tax subtraction level for members of the Virginia National Guard from \$3,000 to \$5,000 per year.
JLC 2017 <i>In-state tuition for all members of the Reserve Components</i>	That the Governor and the General Assembly change the eligibility for in-state tuition to include all members of the Virginia National Guard and the Reserve components, thus recognizing their service to the Commonwealth and treating them equally to the active components and veterans
JLC 2017 <i>VMSDEP</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly remove the requirement that a veteran's disability rating be combat related. Instead, a permanent service-connected disability rating of at least 90%, plus satisfaction of the other requirements currently in the Code, would qualify a veteran's spouse or child for VMSDEP benefits.
JLC 2017 <i>Electronic Ballot Return</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly enact legislation and provide budget support of a pilot program for the electronic return of absentee ballots by Virginia's deployed military service members to enfranchise their voting privileges.

